

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of forming a decorative surface feature on an article formed in a mold, the method comprising the steps of:

a. providing a mold assembly comprising a first mold portion having a textured surface, and a second mold portion, the first and the second mold portions defining a cavity;

b. heating a first material;

c. introducing the first material into the cavity;

d. closing the mold cavity; and

e. introducing a second material into the cavity, such that an imprint of the textured surface is transferred to the first material, thereby forming an article having a decorative surface feature formed thereon.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the introduction of the second material into the cavity applies a force on the first material, such that the first material is moved into contact with the textured surface of the first mold portion, thereby forming the article having a decorative surface feature formed thereon.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is introduced into the cavity by an injection molding process.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the second material is introduced into the cavity by a low pressure injection molding process.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the first mold portion is a mold cavity.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the second mold portion is a mold core.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the textured surface of first mold portion defines a decorative indicium.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material is introduced into the cavity subsequent to being heated.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material is heated subsequent to being introduced into the cavity.
10. The method of claim 1, further including a step (f), prior to step (b), wherein a the first material is one of a formed and a molded material so as to provide a first material having a predetermined shape.
11. The method of claim 1, further including a source of heat for heating the first material.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of heating the first material occurs within the mold assembly.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the second material has a generally rigid characteristic for structurally supporting the first material.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material is made of a material selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic olefin and vinyl.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is made of a material selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, thermoplastic olefin, and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the first material comprises a plurality of layers of material.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the first material is comprises a layer of polypropylene foam and one of a layer of thermoplastic olefin and vinyl.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein one of the first and second materials includes an adhesive promoter to form a bond between the first and second materials.

19. A method of forming a decorative surface feature on an article formed in a mold, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a mold assembly comprising a first mold portion having a textured surface, and a second mold portion, the first and the second mold portions defining a cavity;
- b. heating a first material;
- c. introducing the first material into the cavity;
- d. introducing a second material into the cavity; and
- e. closing the mold cavity, wherein an imprint of the textured surface is transferred to the first material, thereby forming an article having a decorative surface feature formed thereon.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the second material is poured into the cavity.